



EXHIBIT 8  
DATE 1-29-07  
HB 430

January 28, 2007

TO: Chairman Mendenhall and Members of the House Business and Labor Committee

FROM: Boyce Fowler, Volunteer Advocate, AARP Montana

**RE: Support of HB 430, Use unclaimed gift card funds to fund affordable housing loan account**

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee for the record my name is Boyce Fowler, volunteer advocate for AARP Montana. AARP is a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to bettering the lives of people 50 and over.

AARP Montana supports HB 430 as a source of revenue generated for the Housing Montana Fund expanded in LC 615. AARP understands the importance of investing in appropriate and affordable housing. According to a report done by the Commission on Affordable Housing, the nation's affordable housing inventory is diminishing as the demand increases. Communities are losing diverse and affordable housing that is essential to meet the needs of all residents. The problem is especially acute for older residents with modest income sources.

We also support HB 430 because it provides a fair playing field for small, local businesses to compete with large multi-state chain businesses. If local businesses that offer gift certificates are required to pay a portion to the state if the certificate is not used, then it seems only fair that stores issuing gift or value cards in Montana should be required to do the same.

Please support HB 430, which provides a reasonable and just source of revenue for the housing trust.